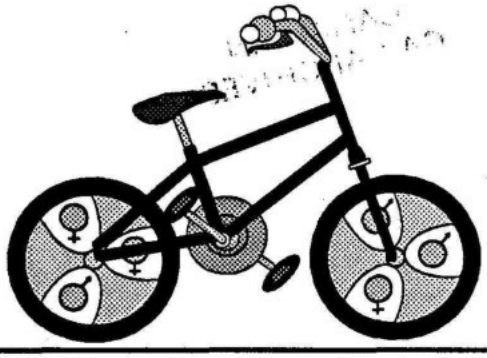

ONTARIO BISEXUAL NETWORK NEWS

Winter/Spring 1994

OBN News, 519 Church Street, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2C9 Infoline: (416)-925-XTRA ext. 2015 / Fax: (905)-649-1314

The Ontario Bisexual Network (OBN) is a group formed to enable contacts among bisexual people in Ontario, and to help them undertake activities of interest. At present, these activities include: a mailing list, a newsletter, support group meetings, social activities, a political action group, education of others, information sharing, and safer sexuality information. The network's only mandate is to bring people together. — OBN Meeting, August 2, 1990.
This newsletter provides a means of information exchange within OBN-Toronto as well as among bisexual community organizations throughout Ontario. — Meeting of Bisexual Community Groups in Ontario, August 14, 1993.

Gay Rights

(news items by Elizabeth Gonzalez)

On April 12, an Alberta Judge ruled that Alberta's Individual Rights Protection Act, which does not prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, is inconsistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms *(Globe and Mail, April 14, 1994)*. The Government of Alberta has 30 days to appeal the court's decision or it must revise the Act. Only Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, the Northwest Territories, and Alberta do not include sexual orientation in their human rights codes.

On April 11, I happened to catch Dick Smyth's Commentary on CFMT. Dick was arguing that Metropolitan Toronto should separate from Ontario and become a province in itself because the interests of Torontonians are completely different from people living in other parts of Ontario. He cited same sex spousal rights as an example. According to him, gay rights make some sense in Toronto but no sense in rural communities in Ontario like Owen Sound. I would imagine there are a lot of people in Owen Sound who would disagree with that statement.

Bisexual Documentary on CITY TV

Prompted by the book *Dual Attraction* by sociology professors Dr. Martin Weinberg and Dr. Colin Williams, City TV has decided to make a show to be aired in June which will investigate bisexuality. The premise of the book is that all people are born bisexual, but that society forces us to choose a sexual preference.

Recently there have been several films in which bisexuals are portrayed as confused and uncomfortable with their sexuality. In this documentary, the people at City TV want to show that bisexuality is a way of life for many, and not necessarily a transition state between homosexuality and heterosexuality. They promise not to judge any group in this program.

Anyone wishing to be interviewed about his or her life as a bisexual should contact Jennifer Morton at (416)-591-7400 ext 2217. If you would like to participate but cannot come out on television, they are willing to mask your identity.

Bisexual Mental Health Issues

Two OBN members are currently putting together a document on mental health issues relating to bisexuals. This document will be included in a package sent to mental health professionals inviting them to a workshop hosted by Carolyn Dallman Downes, Bruce Small and other OBN members.

While counselling bisexuals, therapists, whether they are straight, gay or lesbian, may find their values regarding family and relationships challenged, especially if multiple partners are involved. They may also have preconceptions about bisexuality that lead them to negate their patients' bisexual identity. It is hoped that this document, and the workshop, will help mental health professionals overcome their biphobia so that they can effectively counsel their patients.

The workshop will be held on Wednesday, June 1st from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. at the 519 Church St. Community Centre. It will be aimed at counsellors and therapists but anyone interested is welcome to attend. The organizers ask that everyone attending donate $3 to cover the cost of the learning materials.

New Groups

Two new groups for bisexuals are in the process of forming. One is a group for bisexual and gay women living in York Region in the area of Yonge St. north of Steeles Ave. (Thornhill, Richmond Hill, Aurora, etc.). When it's up and running the group will have meetings semi-regularly as well as host other social events.

Monogamous Bisexuals & Partners is a group for couples in which one or both partners are bisexual. Its aim is to provide support for both partners and to try to dispel the myth that all bisexuals are non-monogamous. It is hoped that this group will meet on a regular basis when more couples express an interest. For more information call 925-XTRA ext 2177.

UK National Bisexual Conference

From August 4th to 6th, the 12th UK National Bisexual Conference will be held in Edinburgh, Scotland. This conference will provide an opportunity for bisexuals to meet and discuss such issues as AIDS and safer sex, isolation, bisexuality and feminism, and bisexual

CANADIAN GAY ARCHIVES

parents. There will also be entertainment and games. For more information and registration forms, send a self-addressed envelope to: Edinburgh Bisexual Group, 58a Broughton St., Edinburgh EH13SA or e-mail to bicon94@ed.ac.uk.

From the Usenet

The following information was found in two news groups on the Usenet, soc.bi and soc.motss (member of the same sex). Most of these articles were in the form of press releases or excerpts from newspapers.

On April 11, the UN Human Rights Committee declared that Tasmanian criminal codes regarding "inter alia anal sex" contravene international human rights conventions. But according to the Attorney-General of Tasmania, the UN Human Rights Committee has no legal standing in the Australian state. Despite public opinion polls which indicate that 60% of the population supports reform of the present same sex laws, and pressure from groups like the Anglican Church of Tasmania, the state government has stood firm in resisting law reform. It has yet to be seen if the Australian Federal Government or the Commonwealth will intervene and legislate to override the criminal code.

According to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) in the U.S., "the Universidad International de las Americas in Costa Rica has an open policy of expelling gay and lesbian students". When the Ministry of Education was urged to force the university to change its policy, the Ministry acknowledged that the policy was unconstitutional but said that a lawsuit must be filed by expelled students before it could demand change. However, "advocates argue that few or no students will be willing to face public censure and discrimination that coming out will entail".

A new quarterly called the Harvard Gay and Lesbian Review promises to offer "intellectually stimulating, non-academic writing about subjects with more depth than many gay publications" and to be "of interest to lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, queers, and straight people". The Review is available in bookstores across the US, and will probably make its way here.

New Books and Other Resources Available

(by Wendy Rogers / OBN-Toronto)

Two new books have come to our attention and both are available through Toronto's Glad Day Bookshop. *Women and Bisexuality*, by Sue George (Scarlet Press 1993) (also available through Toronto Women's Bookstore) and *Dual Attraction*, by Martin S. Weinberg, Colin J. Williams and Douglas W. Pryor (Oxford University Press, 1994).

Dual Attraction is the book that sparked the interest of City-TV producers resulting in their upcoming documentarty on bisexuality this June. No OBN member that I have spoken to has reviewed these titles yet, so please let us know what you think of them.

For your convenience and information, Glad Day Bookshop in Toronto puts out a monthly newsletter with booklists. These are one source that can help us continue to keep abreast of the new books available on Bisexuality in general. The newsletter is released a couple of days before the beginning of each month and is available at the bookstore. We also have lists of reading material and research available through the OBN and OBN meetings.

Another source of Bi-friendly information, discussion, interests, multiculturism and activism is a list of International Computer Networks of Electronic mail. This list is available at our meetings and another is also distributed throughout the International Directory of Bisexual Groups published by the Bisexual Resource Center, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge MA, USA 02140. Phone (617)-338-9595. Electronic mail brc@panix.com.

The directory is updated annually and is available by sending a donation of $5.00 U.S. (more, if you can) by International Postal Money Order. Multiple copies of the directory are as follows: 5-19 copies $3.50 US each; 20+ copies $3.00 US each with additional discounts available to retail vendors. All Bisexual groups listed in the directory receive a copy free of charge. Multiple copies of the directory can be paid by cheque for orders over $25.00 US. The directory is also available for browsing at OBN meetings in Toronto.

Queen's Park Hesitant on Same Sex Rights

In a series of articles, the Toronto Star reported first on April 16th that Bob Rae's NDP Government was ready to "bite the bullet" and go forward to change provincial laws dealing with families, marriage and children so as to put heterosexual and homosexual relationships on virtually the same footing. Then on April 20th the Star reported that the NDP caucus was divided on the issue and that some MPPs will vote against their party on same-sex rights.

Finally, on April 21st, the Star announced that the issue had been dropped from the agenda of this week's caucus meeting and cabinet meeting. Star-Columnist Thomas Walkom described the government as being in a "serious bind on this issue".

Ontario Bisexual Group Addresses

BEST — Bisexual Essex County Support Team, Tecumseh South Postal Outlet, P.O. Box 21004, Tecumseh, Ontario N8N 4S1.

BiVERSE, 290 Rubidge St., Peterborough, Ontario K9J 3P4.

CKWBL — Cambridge, Kitchener-Waterloo Bisexual Liberation, P.O. Box 28002, Parkdale Postal Outlet, Waterloo N2L 6J8, (519)-884-4722.

Ontario Bisexual Network, 519 Church St., Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2C9. Tel: (416)-925-XTRA, ext. 2015. Fax: (905)-649-1314.

BiTown Bisexuals, 432 Kensington Ave., Ottawa, Ontario K1Z 6G8. Voice mail (613)-763-7784, or (613)-724-6065.

OBN Meeting Times

OBN Meetings are held on the first Thursday of every month, from 6 to 8 p.m., and on the third Thursday of every month from 8-10 pm, at the 519 Church St. Community Centre in Toronto (just north of Wellesley St.).

The meetings provide information and support for bisexual women and men. Newsletters are available at the 519 Centre and at every meeting. For information about events phone: 925-XTRA, ext 2015.